

Message Text

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43

ACTION AID-31

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6480

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L 2591

E O 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, JO, IS

SUBJECT: PL 480 TITLE II FY-76 PROGRAM IN ISRAELI OCCUPIED
TERRITORIES

REF: TEL AVIV A-70

1. EMB WISHES TO CALL DEPT'S ATTENTION TO REPAIR WHICH
TRANSMITTED VOLUNTARY AGENCY PROGRAM PROPOSALS FOR PL 480 TITLE
II ASSISTANCE IN WEST BANK AND GAZA/SINAI FOR FY-76. WE RECOMMENDED
THEREIN THAT VOLAG PROGRAMS BE CONTI UED AT OR ABOUT RECIPIENT
LEVELS APPROVED FOR FY-75 AND THAT EXCEPTION TO AID GUIDELINES
BE MADE TO PERMIT CONTINUED FEEDING OF ARAB ADULT SOCIA
CASES. WE HAVE LEARNED, HOWEVER, THAT AID/W IS CON-
SIDERING PL 480 TITLE II PROGRAM FOR OCCUPIED TERRI-
TORIES WITH TOTAL VALUE OF DOLS 1.3 MILLION, FEEDING 56,000
RECIPIENTS, WHEREAS WE CALCULATE CONTINUATIOON OF VOLAG
PROGRAMS AT PRESENT LEVEL OF 99,000 RECIPIENTS WOULD
REQUIRE FOODSTUFFS VALUED
AT APPROXIMATELY DOLS 2.4 MILLION.

2. AS AIRGRAM EXPLAINS, WE BELIEVE GOI MINISTRY OF
SOCIAL WELFARE HAS DONE GOOD JOB OF ASSUMING MAJOR SHARE
OF WELFARE CASE BURDEN, BUT IN VIEW OF CURRENT BUDGETARY
RESTRICTIONS IT WILL BE UNABLE IN COMING YEAR TO ASSUME
COSTS OF FOOD RATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL 43,000 RECIPIENTS
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NOW ON VOLAG ROLLS. IF ANYTHING, HIGH RATE OF INFLATION

AND THREAT OF UNEMPLOYMENT WILL LEAD TO WORSENER ECONOMIC SITUATION IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND INCREASE BURDEN ON ALL WELFARE AGENCIES.

3. IN ADDITION TO HUMANITARIAN ASPECT WE ARE CONCERNED BY POSSIBILITY THAT SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION IN USG TITLE II PROGRAMS MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS SHIFT IN OVERALL USG POLICY TOWARD OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. IF CUTS ARE MADE, SOCIAL WELFARE CASES WOULD BE TRANSFERRED FROM VOLAGS TO OCCUPYING MILITARY ADMINISTRATION, RATHER THAN TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OR INDIGENOUS VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS AS SOUGHT BY AID GUIDELINES. THIS COUPLED WITH MAGNITUDE OF REDUCTION IN US AID OF OVER 40 PERCENT MIGHT BE READ BY BOTH ARABS AND ISRAELIS AS INDICATION OF REDUCED USG INTEREST IN ARAB POPULATIONS IN TERRITORIES. ANY SUCH MISUNDERSTANDING WOULD BE PARTICULARLY INOPPORTUNE IN TIME FRAME OF NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS.

4. REDUCTION IN VOLAG PROGRAMS COULD ALSO DIMINISH ABILITY OF USG TO PLAY CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN TERRITORIES THROUGH DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN FUTURE. VOLAG PROGRAMS HAVE PROVIDED IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF CONTINUITY IN USG CONTACT WITH LOCAL POPULATIONS AND CONSTITUTE POTENTIAL VEHICLE FOR EXPANSION OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE SHOULD CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANT.

5. WE FULLY UNDERSTAND BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS AND COMPETING CLAIMS WITHIN TITLE II PROGRAM: HOWEVER, FOR REASONS GIVEN ABOVE WE BELIEVE WEST BANK AND GAZA/ SINAI ARE EXCEPTIONAL CASES WHOSE ALLOCATIONS SHOULD NOT BE REDUCED AT PRESENT TIME. CONSEQUENTLY WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT VOLAG PROPOSALS BE APPROVED AS SUBMITTED. VELIOTES

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